

Enforcing the monroe doctrine all the way to the becoming of american empire

[History](#), [Empires](#)



The American Empire started taking shape when the U. S. started enforcing the Monroe Doctrine in 1895, to assert its control over Latin America.

America was just starting to build a navy that could compete with other world powers. It wouldn't have the chance to show off these powers until the Spanish-American War. America was outraged with the inhumane way, Spain was treating the Cubans. Civilians were being locked up in prison camps and dying by the thousands, as punishment for a Cuban guerrilla revolt. The Sinking of the U. S. Battleship The Maine further infuriated the American public and Spain declared war on April 24, 1898. The first battle was fought across the world in the Philippines.

On May 1st 1898 Commodore Dewey's fleet cornered the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay and destroyed it. With this decisive victory America saw its chance to gain a valuable foothold in the Asian market by controlling the Philippines. Hawaii was annexed within months due to it being the halfway point to the Philippines, America's empire was growing faster than anyone predicted. Spain eventually surrendered in Cuba, giving it up, and ceded Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States. Before the war America wanted Europe to know it had no intention of fighting this war to gain territory.

On the other hand, when war came McKinley saw it as an opportunity. During the war he wrote privately "While we are conducting war and until its conclusion, we must keep all we get; when the war is over we must keep what we want" (McKinley 593). At home the public didn't advocate colonial rule over large populations, such as the Philippines, it was European-style imperialism. Spain ceded The Philippines to the U. S. for 20 million dollars in

the Treaty of Paris. The treaty was barely ratified in February 1899, by the Senate in a two-thirds vote with one to spare. The Senates indecisiveness indicates the anti-expansionist, anti-empirical feelings of the American public. Andrew Carnegie offered to buy Filipino freedom with a check for 20 million dollars.

Constitutionalists believe that the constitution doesn't support empire building. The government didn't want to give up control of Philippines because they had the Progressive idea of Manifest Destiny for the island. They thought the Filipinos were unfit for self rule and white Anglo-Saxon ways were better. Also that the Filipino government would collapse and that the Progressive idea of capitalism and democracy could save them. I would argue that U. S. involvement in W. W. I was more Progressive than Imperialistic, but not in a purely Progressive sense. Considering Progressives were highly opposed to the war, Republicans, Democrats and the Populist Party all opposed our involvement. The American Union against Militarism, and the Womens Peace Party both denounced the war and supported American neutrality at all costs. However, in President Wilson's declaration of war speech he attempts to sell Progressives on the war by saying, our involvement will make the world safe for democracy (Wilson 618). He also says by helping win the war, we would earn a place at the peace table, where it would spread the country's democratic ideas to the rest of the world (Wilson 618). This is of course refers to the underlying point in the Progressive idea of Manifest Destiny—our moral duty to spread democracy and capitalism to the rest of the world.

Now these are just words that Wilson uses to gain support for the war, but one could argue that they are both Progressive and empirical in nature. The Manifest Destiny connection of the U. S. s intentions in W. W. I supports this. Progressive because Wilson says we are standing up for democracy and helping people, by spreading democracy and capitalism around the world. Imperialism because we are trying to force our ideas of whats right, on other nations. In the end however, I dont think American involvement in The Great War was clearly Imperialistic or Progressive, more a mixture of both. If the Progressives had their way we would have never entered the war, but necessity arose. Imperialists and expansionists in this country, would likely oppose the war due to there being no chance in acquiring new territories. Finally it came down to us standing up to Germany, and showing the world that the U. S. is a new world power, and major player in world affairs. That is what we did by joining the war and setting the stage, for future global power structures.